

June 10, 2010

Dear Chairman McDermott:

I was wrongfully terminated by my school district employer in April of 2008 most likely because of age discrimination and could not fight the termination in court, as I did not have the resources to do so. Instead, I have been forced to go on unemployment compensation. Although I have been on UI before and had little trouble finding other work, even if it meant relocating to another state, it has been absolutely horrible this time. This "recession" really isn't a recession at all for those of us who are jobless but is more of a depression. I have sent literally hundreds of resumes and filled out hundreds of job applications, with little success in even hearing from employers. I have had perhaps ten interviews in two years, with about half of those being Americorps jobs and no job offers. I have applied not only for teaching jobs but also for entry level and clerical jobs, and I have come up empty. This despite my having many skills I have acquired over the decades. I have cast a wider net to include employment in other states, specifically Oregon (I was working in Nevada at the time I was wrongfully terminated), but to date I have still not found anything.

I am currently on Tier IV, which will run out in about four or five weeks. After that, there is nothing. No income, nothing. I have no spouse to support me, no home to sell, no more savings to cash in. I am too young to collect Social Security and at 55 deemed too old to work. I am being forced to move out of an apartment I have rented for twelve years, stopped paying all of my utilities, and am trying to move out of state from Reno, Nevada, to Medford, Oregon, where I still have family. I am being forced to live with my brother sleeping on a couch instead of living out of my car, and my brother is in dire financial straits. I don't know how long HE can keep his place. It's the only place I have access to for myself and my two small dogs, which I refuse to give up. They have helped me keep my sanity, what is left of it, in this horrible economy. While I have not seriously considered suicide, I can understand how some people have gone that route.

Meanwhile, Congress turns a deaf ear to the plight of the long-term unemployed, including those about to or have exhausted all tiers of federal unemployment. These politicians yammer about the "deficit," especially those who helped former president Bush create it, they give massive handouts to Wall Street and countries like Greece, they bail out key industries in this country, but as for the long-term unemployed, those "bums" can die for all these representatives care. It dovetails perfectly with these representatives' neoliberal beliefs, which is little more than feudalism. They play games with our lives in order to score political points in November. Never mind, absent a real jobs program, unemployment compensation is the best economic stimulus there is. Meanwhile, more people are thrown out into the street and being forced to fend for themselves. We desperately need help, and we aren't getting it.

The jobs crisis is the most important issue facing this country. I fear some very serious repercussions if this problem isn't dealt with very soon.

Please do something for those of us who are long-term unemployed, including adding additional weeks of unemployment (Tier V), not just moving back the filing dates.

Sincerely,

Susan Nunes